

Tour of TO
Feb 3, 2011
San Marino Middle School, 6th graders
Four groups of about 15 students each
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I talked about elements and minerals by starting with the periodic table. A good number of kids in each group already knew the basic stuff about atomic structure and I realized that they were prepared to absorb topics that typically seem advanced for same age kids in most public schools. Then, I continued with the question why the universe is so diverse knowing that the elements -as the building blocks- are so few. Using water and quartz I showed them how chemical bonding results in compounds with entirely different physical properties compared to the constituting elements. Kids showed big curiosity when I showed them silicon and quartz. Most of them knew about special properties of Si and its many applications but they had not seen the element.

Compared to my previous interactions with public schools this was a different experience for me.

Next time I would show them some chemical reactions involving minerals.